

DCFS Licensing Advisory Council
DCFS 1911 S. Indiana Ave. Chicago, IL 60616
June 13, 2019
11:00 - 1:00 pm
APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	STAFF	GUESTS
Jennifer Alexander		Shontee Blankenship	DeCarla Burton
Carie Bires		Jay Crome	Kisha Davis (IDHS)
Kristi Boyson		Debra DeValdivielso	Donna Emmons
Dana David		Mary Harlan	Rose Nardi
Maria Estlund (co-chair)		Theenshina Mayfield	Anita Rumage
Jamilah Jor'dan		Beth Seggebruch	
Beth Knight		George Vennikandam (co-chair)	
Tom Layman		Edie Washington Gurley	
Dara Munson		Jill Wilson	
Gail Nelson		Ken Yordy	
Malia Owens		Denina Young	
Laura Pleasants			
Martina Rocha			
Emily Ropars			
Stephanie Spanbauer			
Sarah Stoliker			
Pat Twymon			
Emnet Ward			
Estefania Hernandez (council staff)			

Welcome and Introductions

Approve Minutes from April 25th, 2019

- Motion: Carie Bires
- Seconded: Beth Knight

Department Updates

Presenter(s): George Vennikandam

- George provided several personnel updates:
 - Carol Morris, Associate Deputy Director, retired effective April 30, as well as Bridget McKnight, Northern Regional Administrator. Later in the meeting, Ken Yordy, Regional Administrator for the Southern Region announced he will be retiring July 31.
 - Edie Washington Gurley is Acting Associate Deputy Director.
 - Beth Seggebruch is Acting Regional Administrator for Central Region.
 - Debra DeValdivielso is Acting Regional Administrator for Northern Region.
- George provided updates on status of background check authorizations
 - New applications for background checks are being processed within 48-72 hours. There is no backlog at this time. The department is facing some challenges with reprints as

there are 1,000 individuals that need a reprint at this time. Providers will be receiving notices for every employee that needs a reprint.

- There were questions raised about the number of vendor sites in Chicago and concerns that they are not as easily accessible as the previous vendor's sites. George confirmed the current vendor should have the same number of sites and has partnered with DCFS to operate in DCFS offices for a certain number of hours, and ultimately the new vendor is providing over 400 more hours/month than previous vendor. However, George will relay the feedback about accessibility of sites to the vendor, and the department will send out an updated list of finger printing locations.
- George shared some highlights from the newly enacted FY2020 DCFS budget
 - This new budget will allow them to hire approximately 300 more staff, most of which will be frontline child welfare staff, as well as recruit foster parents.
 - In response to questions about whether day care licensing would receive any funding for increased head count to reduce DCLR caseloads, George confirmed it will not, as the real challenge for licensing is not its funded headcount, it is the vacancies within the funded headcount. It has been especially challenging to find qualified Spanish speaking DCLRs.
- There will also be some reorganization of DCFS management structure to better align divisions; this should be announced soon.

Legislative Updates/Session Recap

Presenter(s): Maria Estlund

- Maria provided a recap of the 2019 legislative session, which was scheduled to end May 31, but went a few days into 'special session,' adjourning in early June.
- The General Assembly passed a balanced state budget for FY2020, as well as a capital budget, which were both signed into law by Governor Pritzker on June 5, 2019. The following investments in early childhood are included the FY20 budget:
 - Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) increased by \$28.8 million, which is sufficient to raise CCAP income eligibility to 200% FPL and increase the exist threshold for families once in the program, as we believe IDHS intends to do.
 - Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) increased by \$50 million, which will be hopefully used to expand slots and increase comprehensive services
 - Early Intervention (EI) increased by \$12 million in response to increased demand, and for IDHS to increase EI provider reimbursement rates for the first time in 10 years. There will also be changes coming soon to provide automatic EI eligibility for infants and toddlers exposed to lead.
 - Early Childhood Construction Grant (ECCG) received \$100 million in grant funding as part of the state's capital budget. This is more than double the amount of ECCG funding in the last capital bill (\$45 million), though we know the need is much higher. The ELC has convened an ad hoc workgroup to review the process from the last grant cycle in 2012 and make recommendations for this upcoming round.
- The following pieces of legislation, passed by the ILGA and awaiting the Governor's signature, impact child care and early education services:
 - House Bill 3631- provides DCFS with more discretion in waiving certain past convictions related to financial crimes when considering licensing applications. This does not provide any automatic waivers; DCFS has final discretion to waive conviction or deny licensure.

- Senate Bill 1952 - eliminates the Basic Skills Test requirement for future teachers seeking their Professional Educator License (PEL) and allows for the payment of student teachers in schools and child care centers
- House Resolution 416 – raises awareness of the early childhood workforce crisis and calls on the state to identify strategies to address staffing challenges, modernize qualifications, and improve engagement of the field in policymaking process through advisory councils and other mechanisms. As a resolution, this is nonbinding and does not require action from state agencies, partners, etc. – but this advisory council will be responsive to the call to action, and the co-chairs commit to:
 - Evaluate membership and identifying gaps in representation (provider types/roles, race, gender, geography, ECE systems, etc.) and pursuing new members to participate in the advisory council as well as its committees, keeping in mind that in most cases, committee members do not have to be appointed members of the advisory council.
 - The co-chairs are awaiting confirmation from department on certain details related to the appointment process, which will determine next steps.
 - Facilitate opportunities for advisory council members to better connect to and engage in the many existing workforce discussions and initiatives occurring at different state tables, workgroups, etc.
 - At the next advisory council meeting, OECD will return to present updates on the compensation consensus statement work presented at the February council meeting.

Lead in Water Testing Updates

Presenter(s): Edie Washington

- Edie provided the most recent data on how many licensed homes and centers had submitted the required survey on construction dates and results of lead samples for their drinking water.
 - Out of 5714 day care homes– 2720 completes survey
 - 1204 submitted results
 - 873 had no lead present; 331 found lead present at or above 2.01ppb
 - Out of 676 group homes– 288 completed the survey
 - 116 submitted results
 - 88 had no lead present; 28 found lead present at or above 2.01ppb
 - Out of 2353 centers–1119 completed the survey
 - 514 submitted results
 - 252 had no lead present; 262 found lead present at or above 2.01ppb
- There are still many outstanding surveys, and DCFS and partners need to reiterate the message to providers to submit their surveys. Many surveys are coming in incomplete (missing month/day for construction year). Because of the computer system set-up, this information is necessary. If providers do not know the exact date (for example “I know our building was completed in July of 1997 but not the exact day”), DCFS recommends first consulting all paperwork/records and if an exact day is not listed, council members suggested submitting as close possible (i.e. July 1, 1997).
- Beth Knight shared that INCCRRA has been working with partners to develop an i-learning training module on lead in water. The target date for the English version is July 1, with the Spanish version to be available soon after. There will also be Training of the Trainer (TOT) efforts in late July to make in-person training more available statewide.

Several council members raised additional questions for discussion:

Q: Should providers expect a response from DCFS after they submit their results? Some have said they did not receive a response after they submitted and were unsure whether to proceed with mitigation plan actions or not.

A: Once survey is turned in, there should be type of correspondence or conversation about next steps. It should be instantaneous, however, it does depend how providers turn their survey in. Also, it should be made standard that providers send in survey with supervisor CCed in case their DCLR is out.

Q: Are DCLRs assessing the content of the mitigation plan (i.e. deeming the mitigation actions appropriate/adequate)? Or just confirming that there is a mitigation plan in place?

A: While DCFS staff are not experts in lead abatement and cannot advise on the best strategy for each situation, they are assessing mitigation plans to ensure providers are taking adequate steps to (i.e. they have plans to mitigate each faucet/source with identified lead, they have put in immediate steps to ensure children are not drinking water from those sources, etc.).

Q: While some labs provide reports that include summaries to help interpret the results, not all do. Many providers do not know how to interpret the lab report. Are there resources or contacts available to help with that?

A: Providers shared that they have called the lab and asked for help interpreting and they are able to walk them through it. The training developed by Elevate Energy and Illinois Action for Children has sample lab reports and walks through each item (training currently available as recorded webinar on IAFC's website; will be included in i-learning module on Gateways).

Q: If providers are struggling to understand lead in water hazards, test results, mitigation strategies, etc., it is even harder for them to communicate with parents. How can we help providers communicate with parents about lead in water without scaring parents?

A: One resource is a set of template letters, created by Elevate Energy, for communicating with parents that the facility will be testing water, the results of tests, the steps taken to mitigate if needed, etc. These templates are available on IAFC's website, and Maria will send links for council members to share with networks.

- Maria also asked for feedback on anything providers feel is missing in the template letters that should be communicated with families (i.e. council members raised questions about if/how to encourage parents to test their own water too, etc.).

April Regional Forums Feedback

Presenter(s): Edie Washington Gurley

- The regional licensing forums for providers were held in April, as well as one additional forum in Waukegan. Overall, DCFS received positive feedback from attendees. At all forums, providers' questions were mostly about lead testing and training, and they shared concerns about mitigation costs.

IDHS Updates

Presenter(s): Kisha Davis

- Along with the FY20 budget increases discussed earlier, IDHS shared that the department is looking to make other improvements:
 - Doubling the Gateways Scholarships funding to reach 600 additional ECE teachers
 - Increasing the income eligibility for Great START wage supplements from \$15/hr to \$18/hr
 - The Child Care Advisory Council will start meeting again for the first time in a couple years

- IDHS has created a marketing committee working on identified strategies to increase CCAP enrollment

Communications Committee Updates

Presenter(s): Ken Yordy

- The Communications Committee is concerned about the confusion and inconsistent information in the field about lead in water testing and mitigation requirements. See Appendix A for full committee report. Discussion highlights and recommendations include:
 - There needs to be a coordinated process for providers to get answers to questions about lead testing, appropriate mitigation strategies, etc. Currently when providers have questions, DCFS suggests contacting IDPH, and often IDPH sends providers back to DCFS. The agencies should identify ways to better coordinate to ensure providers are successfully addressing lead in their water.
 - The committee recommends revisiting DCFS FAQ document on the Sunshine website and revise with any necessary updates/changes and to add clarification on new questions and issues providers and DCLRs have raised.
 - Advisory council members should send any additional questions to Ken Yordy.
 - DCFS and IDPH will answer and the FAQ document will be updated as appropriate.
- The committee inquired about any available funding sources (state, federal, or nonprofit grants) or any agencies currently seeking funding to provide grants for mitigation costs. Council members were aware of the following opportunities:
 - Chicago DFSS is providing financial support to the programs they fund
 - Elevate Energy has funding to help Chicago child care homes with testing costs
 - FY20 state budget included \$15 million re-appropriation for IDPH CLEAR-Win program, which provides funding for mitigation in residential homes. It is assumed child care homes will be eligible, but IDPH has to determine how these funds will be distributed and by whom, what the grant process will look like, and timeline.
 - FY20 state budget had \$50 million for lead abatement in schools. Advocates will be pushing for child care centers to be included as schools, but again, the expected timeline is unclear.
 - Will the capital bill provide dollars for addressing lead in water (and in general)?
 - The \$100 million in funding for the Early Childhood Construction Grant (ECCG) discussed earlier may be a potential resource for lead abatement for child care centers and school-based programs. The goal of the grants is to increase access to early childhood settings in underserved communities, and there are a wide range of projects that fall under that umbrella.
 - The ELC created an ad hoc workgroup charged with making recommendations to the state on the ECCG grant process. As part of this work, Maria Estlund committed to requesting confirmation that lead mitigation be an allowable use of ECCG funds to ensure access to safe environments.
 - There is still ongoing analysis of all the funding streams included in the capital bill and whether any can be used for larger lead abatement projects in communities
- Committee recommends making the new 718b fingerprint-based criminal background authorization form to be made available electronically in a fillable format like Microsoft Word or Adobe Reader. This will reduce the many challenges created by handwriting misinterpretation, incomplete forms, etc.
 - Committee also raised the need for the 718b to be translated into Spanish and sought clarification on what forms Spanish-speaking providers should be using. DCFS confirmed

that Spanish-speaking providers can use the old form available in Spanish until the 718b is translated and available.

Systems Integration Updates

Presenter(s): Tom Layman

- Tom shared that the committee is working to set up a couple of meetings on their ongoing projects, including the emergency preparedness ad hoc workgroup looking into aligning standards around active shooter plans, etc.

Training Updates

Presenter(s): Beth Knight and Eddie Washington

- The committee has continued efforts to look at best practices and resources for improving organizational practices like documentation. The committee will be sending out a request soon to council members and other partners for information on practices, sample documents, etc.
- The statewide Interagency Team pulled together a workgroup to roll out regional expulsion TOT events across the state beginning in July. Through these TOT events, every part of the early childhood system (CCR&Rs, Early Intervention, ISBE, etc.) will be trained to deliver workshops with standardized information and resources on expulsion and increase available training offerings statewide.

Policy and Rules

Presenter(s): Carie Bires, Jay Crome

- The committee co-chairs had a call with George and Maria to map out this new committee. The co-chairs are working on framing the purpose, scope and goals of committee to present to the council for feedback. Then we will begin populating the committee.

Public Comment

- Council members asked about where updated department procedures can be located by providers. The procedures available on the DCFS website (only for 406 licensed homes) were last updated in 2014. There was discussion on the role of/audience for procedures, which provide DCFS staff with guidance on monitoring the rules, and council members expressed that providers find the procedures to be helpful if they have questions or want more information on implementing the standards laid out in rule.
 - DCFS will update the procedures after the anticipated package of rule changes is adopted.

Next Meeting Date and location:

August 8, 2019 11:00am – 1:00pm

DCFS 1911 S. Indiana, 9th floor conference room

Chicago, IL

Appendix A: Communications Committee Report

Conference Call Thursday, June 13, 2019

11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Testing Water for Lead:

There continues to be confusion concerning testing water for lead.

There seems to be number of business' offering to conduct the test but are not state approved. This seems to be less of a problem now because day care providers are now informed that they need to use the approved testing sites.

There appears to be confusion as to what faucets should be included in the lead testing. Some approved lead testing labs are saying all the faucets need to be tested, others are saying only the ones used by children for drinking water and or cooking.

It is noted that some day care licensing representatives are telling licensed day care homes to test all the faucets in the home even if some bathrooms are not on the license and children are not in those areas. Other licensing representatives are telling providers that they only need to test the faucets that children are drinking out of and faucets that are used for cooking.

The training requirement for lead testing is an area of confusion. Some providers and licensing representatives are thinking that only training that is approved by the Department is acceptable training. The Department has no "approved" training or "disapproved" training but the training must have two topics, 1. Impact of lead exposure on children. 2. Information mitigation plans.

This information is on the Sunshine Website it might be a good idea to concentrate on sending out an information guide to refer to the Sunshine Website for this information. It appears to be very clear on the website.

Correct mitigation plans are an area of confusion. Day Care Licensing Representatives are not qualified to provide information on correct mitigation plans. The Communications Committee is not suggesting that this should change. The Sunshine Website refers providers to the Illinois Department of Public Health but when the Illinois Department of Public Health is contacted they are referring providers back to DCFS Licensing. The Sunshine Website refers providers to Regional IDPH Lead Specialist. The Committee is recommending some contact numbers be put on the website. The Committee is suggesting the Department set up meetings with the Department of Public Health and Regional IDPH Lead Specialist in order to coordinate efforts on mitigation plans.

There is confusion on acceptable temporary mitigation plans and long term mitigation plans.

1. If a day care chooses to use bottled water rather than retest their water is that acceptable for long term mitigation?
2. If a day care has one faucet that has hi lead content can they shut that faucet off or make sure the children only use that faucet for washing hands and not drinking?

This is just an example of questions that are coming up and there seems to be no process where providers can be directed to get answers.

The Communications committee is inquiring if there are any agencies seeking grants or funds for providers who have to complete expensive mitigation plans.

Translation in Spanish:

The new CFS 718b authorization forms have not been translated in Spanish. Currently Spanish speaking providers are using the old authorization form.

CFS 718b Authorization Form:

The Communication Committee is recommending that the new 718b set up in fillable on a fillable form where providers could complete the form, print it and then sign it. The reason for this is, it would eliminate incorrect recordings due to poor handwriting and or prevent certain required fields from being left blank.

New Fingerprint Vender:

When the new fingerprint vender, Biometric Impressions started out, there were several problems with them following their schedule. It appears as though there have been no noted current problems with Biometric Impressions following the schedule and getting fingerprints completed.

Expulsion Law:

There is much confusion concerning the Expulsion Law that was past. As of this date, the Department has not developed a policy to address the new law. The confusion seems to be, on what grounds a child can be discharged from child care and when they cannot. A day care center or home is not like a public school where a school has resources and special classes to work with children a child care provider does not. The Communications committee is recommending special training be developed to assist providers in dealing with challenging children who may be a safety concern to other children.